

**Remarks of Benjamin Grumbles**  
**Office of Water, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**  
**Delaware River Basin Water Resources Plan Signing**  
**Wilmington, Delaware**  
**September 13, 2004**

Thank you. It is a pleasure to be here to meet so many partners in our effort to help further clean up America's watersheds. By working together with partners at the state and local level, communities, businesses, and non-profits we are able to make real improvements.

I want to specifically thank the Delaware River Basin Commission for its tremendous participation in this initiative and the City of Wilmington for hosting today's event.

Today, all across America, more and more people are remembering that we all have an obligation to be good stewards of our natural heritage by caring for our watersheds.

After all, one of the most important ways we can protect our rivers, lakes, and streams is by better managing what happens in the watersheds in which they are located. That's because the greatest threat to America's waterways today comes, not from pollution dumped into them directly, but from pollution that runs-off into them – non-point source pollution.

Oil from city streets and parking lots, excess fertilizer and herbicides that run-off from suburban lawns, animal waste from farms – all this and more finds its way into our precious rivers, lakes, streams, and coastal waters.

If we are going to leave our water purer than we found it, we must redouble our efforts to implement a watershed management approach in every part of our country. That is what is behind President Bush's Watershed Initiative – a landmark program to help develop new, far-reaching, innovative plans for the protection of America's most important watersheds.

I am pleased to report that since the President's announcement of this Initiative, the response nationwide has been overwhelming.

The grants that we are awarding to watershed organizations throughout America will help tackle some of the greatest threats our watersheds face. These include loss of habitat, which threatens wild and marine life and increases run-off; invasive species that throw aquatic ecosystems out of balance; and the effects of non-point source pollution on water quality.

Our focus on watersheds will also help transform the way Americans think about how they can make a difference for cleaner water. As people learn more about the ways even small individual actions can add up to big environmental consequences, they will become an active partner in our effort to clean up America's waterways.

Today's Watershed Summit is a featured stop on our 2004 National Water Tour because it focuses on the unique set of water issues facing the Delaware River Basin.

The Delaware River Basin has always held a special place in the history of the Nation and the Mid-Atlantic States. The Delaware has been a focal point of change from George Washington crossing the Delaware to assure our freedom during the Revolutionary War to the groundbreaking 1961 Delaware River Basin Compact signed by President Kennedy and the four basin state governors which marked the first time the federal and state governments worked as true partners in river basin planning.

As the EPA spokesperson for water programs, it's important for EPA to highlight some of the innovative ideas of how local water quality problems are being solved around the United States.

I've had the privilege this year of being in New York City's Central Park to see the restoration of this National Treasure -- the beautiful and healthy lawns they've achieved by using the right amount of fertilizers and pesticides.

And I've had the opportunity to visit Kansas City to help celebrate the achievements of Lewis and Clark, who were two of America's early explorers to monitor our nation's water ways.

And last month, EPA Administrator Mike Leavitt was in Rochester, New York on our monitoring ship the Lake Guardian leading the efforts to restore our Great Lakes.

Today, I have the pleasure of being in Wilmington, Delaware to present the Delaware River Basin Water Resources Plan.

The Delaware River Basin Water Resources Plan, that you will hear about in more detail this afternoon, focuses on the concept of "Integrated Water Resource Management", which recognizes the interconnected nature of managing water resources for multiple purposes for current and future generations.

The Delaware Estuary and the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary are wonderful examples of how federal and state agencies, public and private partnerships integrate regulatory actions, scientific and monitoring studies, and conservation and enhancement activities through a Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan for the Delaware Estuary.

Your watershed approach balances environmental protection goals with the development of economically sustainable urban communities serves as a model for our nation.

At EPA, our role is to assist you in achieving those goals. Working with our partners to meet the requirements of the Clean Water Act, we are responsible for ensuring appropriate

water quality standards, conducting effective monitoring and source water assessments, and maintaining up to date permits.

Monitoring is one of the top priority areas for EPA. Acquiring and managing data will help to strategically address watershed problems on a priority basis. A conference session on analyzing watershed landscapes using GIS showcases the technology that will assist our decision-making and prioritization. Effective monitoring is foundation for environmental protection and watershed-based decision-making.

Another EPA priority is water conservation and efficiency. Nearly 15 million people or 5% of the US population rely on the Delaware River and its feeder streams and reservoirs for water. The Delaware provides New York City with roughly half of its water supply.

The Delaware River Basin Water Resource Plan recognizes the need to balance allocation of water resources and the effects of a growing population on demand for safe drinking water and the potential impacts of natural occurrences such as drought and flooding on source waters.

EPA will increasingly focus on water conservation and efficiency through education, funding and technical assistance. At the national level, we will be embarking on the development of a voluntary labeling of water-efficient appliances and other products, which is similar to the energy conservation-labeling program EnergyStar.

Finally, the restoration of watersheds will be dependant on coordinated efforts integrating source water assessment and watershed assessments to effectively target Clean Water Act programs to attain source water protection goals and watershed enhancement efforts. EPA's targeted watershed grants program will assist local agencies to carry out these locally driven efforts.

I look forward to continuing to work together on these important efforts. I know you will find the summit informative and enjoyable. Thank you.

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